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Chair: Ms. Mejía Vélez ..... (Colombia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 67: Right of peoples to self-determination (*continued*) (A/C.3/71/L.49)

Draft resolution A/C.3/71/L.49: Universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination

1. **Ms. Lodhi** (Pakistan), introducing the draft resolution, said that the right to self-determination was laid down in Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations. It was a fundamental principle of international law and a cornerstone of the International Covenants on Human Rights. Exercise of the right to self-determination had enabled millions across the world to emerge from the yoke of colonial and foreign occupation and alien domination.

2. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Benin, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Comoros, Ecuador, Egypt, Ghana, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libya, Madagascar, Maldives, Nicaragua, Palau, Paraguay, Qatar, Senegal, Seychelles, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tunisia, Uganda, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Yemen and Zambia had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

3. **Mr. Visonnavong** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that his delegation wished to withdraw its sponsorship of the draft resolution.

Agenda item 68: Promotion and protection of human rights (*continued*)

(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms (*continued*) (A/C.3/71/L.32, A/C.3/71/L.33 and A/C.3/71/L.34)

Draft resolution A/C.3/71/L.32: The right to development

4. **Ms. Rodríguez Abascal** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, said that it was a continuation of the efforts of the open-ended Working Group on the Right to Development and the implementation of Human Rights Council resolution 30/28 on the right to development.

5. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Palau had become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

Draft resolution A/C.3/71/L.33: Human rights and unilateral coercive measures

6. **Ms. Rodríguez Abascal** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, said that the Movement was opposed to unilateral coercive measures, including those used as a tool of economic and political repression, especially against developing countries. Such measures violated international law and the Charter of the United Nations, and impeded social and economic development and the full enjoyment of human rights.

7. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the Russian Federation had become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

Draft resolution A/C.3/71/L.34: Enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights

8. **Ms. Rodríguez Abascal** (Cuba), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, said that the draft resolution recognized the essential role of enhanced international cooperation for achieving all goals of the United Nations, including the promotion of human rights.

9. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the Russian Federation had become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

(c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives (*continued*) (A/C.3/71/L.23 and A/C.3/71/L.24)

10. **Mr. Poveda Brito** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), speaking on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, said that the Human Rights Council, as a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly, was responsible for the consideration of human rights situations in all countries in the context of the universal periodic review. He deplored the continued use of country-specific resolutions by the Third Committee and the Human Rights Council. Such

resolutions were politically motivated and violated the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity. There was a need to promote greater coherence and complementarity between the work of the Third Committee and the Human Rights Council in order to avoid duplication.

11. The universal periodic review was the main intergovernmental mechanism for reviewing human rights issues at the national level with the full involvement of the country concerned and with due consideration for its capacity-building needs. It was important to ensure that the universal periodic review remained an action-oriented, cooperative mechanism, based on objective and reliable information and interactive dialogue. The country concerned must be fully involved in the review process, which should be conducted in an impartial, transparent, non-selective, constructive, non-confrontational and non-politicized manner.

12. He called upon all States members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries to support other States members of the Movement under review. In addition, States under review should mention in their universal periodic review reports any unilateral coercive measures taken against other countries, together with an assessment of the human rights impact of such measures.

13. **Mr. Dapkiunas** (Belarus), speaking on a point of order, said that his delegation wished to move the adjournment of the debate on agenda item 68 (c), in accordance with rule 116 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. Explaining the motion, which was unprecedented in the history of the Third Committee, he said that while his delegation did not challenge the validity of concerns about specific country situations or the right of other delegations to bring up those concerns, it regretted the use of country-specific resolutions, which were arbitrary and divisive and resulted in animosity and mutual distrust. Positive action on human rights issues depended on national Governments, yet such resolutions only served to shut off positive engagement with the Governments concerned, rendering country-specific resolutions ineffective. Other instruments and methods of engagement, such as the universal periodic review, were preferable.

14. The Chair said that, under rule 116 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, she would give the floor to two delegations in favour of the motion to adjourn debate and two delegations that opposed it, following which the motion would be immediately put to the vote.

15. **Mr. Yao** Shaojun (China) said that countries should resolve differences in human rights situations through constructive dialogue and cooperation on a basis of equality and mutual respect. China rejected the politicization of human rights, the naming and shaming of certain countries and the overt pressure exerted by country-specific human rights resolutions, as such practices only exacerbated confrontation. It would therefore vote in favour of the motion.

16. **Mr. Cepero Aguilar** (Cuba) said that his delegation opposed any means of confronting or singling out countries to delay the discussion and analysis of human rights situations. The universal periodic review was the only mechanism that allowed such situations to be assessed objectively and fairly. In line with its traditional opposition to country-specific human rights resolutions, his delegation supported the motion.

17. **Mr. Al-Mouallimi** (Saudi Arabia) said that a collective no-action motion on an entire agenda item would be unprecedented and serve to stifle legitimate debate on human rights situations of concern to the international community. When such issues fell to the consideration of the General Assembly, it was vital for each Member State to make an informed voting decision on the basis of the proposed draft resolution, and a no-action motion would deprive Member States of that opportunity. The broad membership of the Third Committee gave it a particular responsibility to consider human rights issues, and the wholesale removal of an item from its agenda would set a dangerous precedent, damaging the coherence and orderliness of its work. To remove all four resolutions from consideration would be unconscionable, and his delegation would therefore vote against the collective no-action motion.

18. **Ms. Stener** (Norway), speaking on behalf of Australia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, New Zealand and Switzerland, said that the Third Committee had a mandate and responsibility to debate and take action on human rights issues, including by addressing human

rights situations and the reports of Special Rapporteurs and representatives. Any motion to prevent a discussion of such issues was unjustified and would undermine the credibility of both the Committee and the General Assembly. Any individual resolution must be considered on its merits, and, while the views of those that opposed the four draft resolutions under the agenda item would be listened to carefully, the removal of the item from consideration was simply unacceptable. Her delegation would therefore vote against the no-action motion.

19. *A recorded vote was taken on the motion for the adjournment of the debate on agenda item 68 (c).*

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, China, Comoros, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Eritrea, Gambia, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Singapore, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Albania, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Palau, Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Yemen, Zambia.

Abstaining:

Armenia, Bhutan, Cambodia, Colombia, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kazakhstan, Lesotho, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Paraguay, Philippines, Rwanda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania.

20. *The motion was rejected by 101 votes to 32, with 37 abstentions.*

Draft resolution A/C.3/71/L.23: Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

21. **Mr. Ružička** (Slovakia), speaking on behalf of the European Union and introducing draft resolution A/C.3/71/L.23, said that the phrase "to include detention facilities" should be added to paragraph 14 (k) after the words "delivery of such aid to all parts of the country".

22. Although several combined reports had been submitted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on the implementation of United Nations Conventions, the situation on the ground had not improved. Human rights abuses had continued, despite the repeated calls by the international community to end the ongoing systematic and widespread violations, which had been recently documented in Human Rights Council resolution 31/18. The resolution was particularly relevant as the leadership of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had been diverting resources into the pursuit of nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes, while the needs of the population in terms of, inter alia, food security continued to be unfulfilled.

23. In addition to other relevant initiatives, his delegation supported the suggestion of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that the Security Council should remain aware of the situation

due to the close relationship between peace, security and human rights on the Korean peninsula and in north-east Asia. The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should act upon the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur; protect its citizens; address the issue of impunity and ensure that those responsible for human rights violations were brought to justice before an inuependent judiciary; extend its full cooperation to the Special Rapporteur and other special procedures of the Human Rights Council; and continue to reinforce its cooperation with humanitarian agencies.

24. **Mr. Bessho** (Japan) said that the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remained critical; accordingly, Japan and the European Union had decided to table the draft resolution.

25. Millions of people in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea required humanitarian assistance, while Typhoon Lionrock had caused severe damage to the north-east of the country in late August 2016. Nonetheless, the authorities, without regard to their citizens, had diverted their limited resources into developing weapons of mass destruction, having launched numerous ballistic missiles and conducted nuclear tests twice in 2016. Such institutional decisions were themselves human rights violations, and new language on the issue had consequently been included in the text of the draft resolution.

26. The draft resolution stressed the importance of dialogue to improving the human rights situation, as the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had made groundless complaints to various delegations in many Third Committee meetings, but had boycotted the interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the country. Although the authorities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had not responded sincerely to the international community's repeated expressions of concern on the human rights situation in their country, sending a strong message was a part of dialogue.

27. The international community must not become accustomed to the protracted human rights violations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Millions of people awaited relief behind closed borders, including foreign nationals, some of whom were Japanese citizens. The authorities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had engaged in the systematic and widespread abduction of foreign nationals who had no prior connection to the country and continued to be separated from their families. Ensuring accountability was crucial to ending the human rights violations carried out by the authorities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In that regard, his delegation supported the activities of United Nations mechanisms, including the Special Rapporteur and the group of independent experts on accountability for human rights violations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

28. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Albania, Argentina, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chile, Georgia, Honduras, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Montenegro, New Zealand, Norway, San Marino, Serbia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey had joined the sponsors.

29. **Mr. Ri** Song Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that his delegation categorically rejected the draft resolution, which was an attempt to interfere in the internal affairs of a sovereign State, and an extreme manifestation of politicization, selectivity and double standards in human rights. It repeated the fabrications contained in the report of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as well as the allegations made by the authorities of the Republic of Korea, which had become obsessed with a shaman's prediction that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would collapse within two years. In view of the unprecedented establishment of a United Nations Human Rights Office in Seoul and the claims that had been made in recent United Nations meetings on human rights, it appeared that United Nations human rights mechanisms had been influenced by the same inexperienced shaman.

30. The draft resolution had the unacceptable goal of overthrowing the political system in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by pursuing the hostile policy of the United States of America, which had previously attempted to exercise pressure on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with regard to nuclear issues. The United States had introduced a large amount of its strategic nuclear assets into the Korean peninsula and had openly staged aggressive joint military exercises with the Republic of Korea,

including drills aimed at removing the leadership of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and occupying Pyongyang.

31. The European Union and Japan had joined the United States in tabling the draft resolution, in spite of the crimes against humanity committed by the United States and other Western countries in the Middle East, particularly Iraq and Afghanistan. Moreover, Japan refused to apologize and compensate for the considerable crimes against humanity it had committed in the past towards the Korean people, including the abduction and forcible drafting of 8.4 million people, the killing of 1 million and the imposition of sexual slavery on 200,000 women and girls.

32. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea hoped for sincere dialogue and cooperation in the international human rights field, but would respond strongly to confrontation and pressure aimed at stifling its system and take all appropriate measures against the increasingly aggressive actions of other States. If the draft resolution was adopted, it would be clear that it could not be considered adopted by consensus.

33. **Ms. Bird** (Australia), speaking on behalf of Canada, Iceland, Liechtenstein and New Zealand, said that the landmark 2014 Commission of Inquiry report on human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea detailed shocking violations based on methodically collected witness testimonies, and the situation had not improved in the past year. A two-track strategy was needed that guaranteed accountability while seeking engagement with the authorities to bring relief to the population. The country's regime must engage unconditionally with the international community and allow access to human rights monitors and Special Procedure mandate holders, as well as to actors delivering humanitarian aid.

34. She called on all Governments to ensure that all workers from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea currently residing in their countries were treated in accordance with human rights and labour standards.

35. Accountability measures for those responsible for crimes against humanity needed to be laid down firmly the international community, including consideration of referral of the situation to the International Criminal Court by the Security Council, as well as other options for combatting impunity.

36. **Ms. Mendelson** (United States of America) said that the regime in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remained among the world's most egregious violators of human rights. The meticulous investigation by the United Nations Commission of Inquiry was harrowing, and detailed systematic, widespread and gross violations. She regretted that the report of the Commission of Inquiry was not more widely available to the public. The draft resolution would send a clear message to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that human rights violations must stop, and that those responsible would be held accountable.

37. *Draft resolution A/C.3/71/L.23, as orally revised, was adopted.*

38. **Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the draft resolution that had just been adopted undermined the credibility of the political and legal terms of reference in the area of international relations, particularly given the fact that international consensus had already been reached on a mechanism for dealing with human rights issues, namely the universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council. He underscored, moreover, that the universal periodic review was the only international human rights mechanism that dealt with States on an equitable basis, regardless of their size or wealth.

39. Reaffirming its principled position, his delegation underscored its rejection of the resolution, as well as all other draft resolutions on human rights situations in specific States submitted to the Third Committee.

40. **Mr. Zagaynov** (Russian Federation) reiterated his delegation's principled opposition to the practice of country-specific human rights resolutions. Many years of experience had shown that such initiatives did not help to develop dialogue with the countries involved, and in fact increased confrontation between States, thereby undermining international cooperation in human rights. His delegation disassociated itself from the consensus on the resolution.

41. **Ms. Rodríguez Abascal** (Cuba) said that her delegation disassociated itself from the consensus on the draft resolution in accordance with its opposition to the imposition of selective, politically motivated resolutions and mandates. Genuine international cooperation, based on principles of objectivity, impartiality and non-selectivity, was the only way to

effectively promote and protect human rights. She urged Member States to give the universal periodic review mechanism an opportunity to foster debate and cooperation without politicization or confrontation. The draft resolution continued to pursue sanctions and the dangerous, counterproductive involvement of the Security Council on matters beyond its mandate. Cuba could not be complicit in attempts to deny the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea their right to peace, self-determination and development.

42. **Mr. Yao** Shaojun (China) said that differences in human rights should be addressed on the basis of equality and mutual respect through constructive dialogue and cooperation. His delegation opposed politicizing human rights matters or exerting pressure on countries through human rights. China was against country-specific resolutions and disassociated itself from the consensus on the draft resolution.

43. **Mr. Oh** Joon (Republic of Korea) said that his delegation welcomed the adoption of the draft resolution, which reflected the grave concern of the international community regarding human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and sent a clear message to cease human rights violations there. His delegation remained deeply concerned at the lack of progress despite sustained efforts by the United Nations in the past decade. It was also regrettable that the authorities in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continued to ignore the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and relevant resolutions. The previous statement by the representative of that administration rejecting the draft resolution before its adoption and slandering co-sponsoring countries was outrageous and sad. He urged the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to focus on its people's livelihoods and human rights instead of diverting its scarce resources in the development of weapons of mass destruction, and to cooperate with the United Nations mechanism and Special Rapporteur.

44. **Mr. Moussa** (Egypt) said that the desired objectives on human rights situations throughout the world could be reached through clear and constructive dialogue, exchange of expertise and best practices, such as through the Human Rights Council's universal periodic review. His delegation was committed to the position of the Non-Aligned Movement, rejecting politicization, double standards and the selective use of human rights platforms to address country-specific situations. On the matter of the abductees from Japan, his delegation underscored the importance of bilateral and multilateral negotiations with a view to addressing the concerns of the Japanese Government, and urged the two parties concerned to engage in constructive dialogue to reach a fair and just solution on that matter.

45. **Ms. Ali** (Singapore) said that Singapore had always taken a consistent and principled position against country-specific resolutions as it considered them highly selective and driven by political rather than human rights considerations. Country-specific resolutions should be addressed under the universal periodic review mechanism in the Human Rights Council. Notwithstanding its principled approach, Singapore had decided to go along with the consensus on the draft resolution.

46. **Mr. Giacomelli da Silva** (Brazil) said that his country recognized certain positive steps taken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea concerning its human rights situation, but was still gravely concerned. Brazil looked forward to tangible improvements in the situation of human rights, including a comprehensive investigation into the issue of international abductions, full cooperation with the United Nations human rights mechanisms and the closure of political prison camps. His delegation deplored the resumption of nuclear tests by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Brazil urged the Government to cooperate fully with the new Special Rapporteur.

47. **Mr. Dehghani** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his delegation disassociated itself from the consensus on the draft resolution as it firmly believed that the continued selective adoption of country-specific resolutions and political exploitation of that mechanism undermined cooperation and breached the Charter of the United Nations as well as the principles of universality, non-selectivity and objectivity in addressing human rights issues.

48. **Mr. Poveda Brito** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that his delegation reiterated its principled position of rejecting politicized and selective approaches to human rights issues. The adoption of country-specific resolutions violated the principle of universality and non-selectivity with which human rights issues should be approached. Venezuela called for efforts to build on the progress made since

the creation of the Human Rights Council, for cooperation on human rights matters to be based on the universal periodic review mechanism, and for the elimination of the selective adoption of country-specific resolutions. Venezuela disassociated itself from the draft resolution for those reasons.

49. **Mr. Thant Sin** (Myanmar) said that his delegation opposed country-specific resolutions selectively targeting Member States as they were counterproductive and not conducive to genuine dialogue and constructive cooperation between the international community and the country concerned. The work of the Committee should be guided by universality, impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity. It should ensure the elimination of double standards and politicization. The universal periodic review was the most dependable and non-controversial monitoring mechanism for addressing the human rights situation in all countries.

50. **Ms. Belskaya** (Belarus) said that her country opposed country-specific topics at the United Nations, including country-specific resolutions, and disassociated itself from the consensus on the draft resolution.

51. **Ms. Ndayishimiye** (Burundi) said that her county disassociated itself from the consensus on the draft resolution in accordance with its principled position of opposing politicization and double standards in human rights matters. Burundi opposed all politically motivated resolutions selectively targeting a type of country, occasionally to bring about regime change or the political destabilization of sovereign states, in contravention of the sacred principles of the Charter of the United Nations . Burundi favoured cooperation over confrontation, which was counterproductive and produced undesirable results. The universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council was the appropriate mechanism for addressing human rights matters in all countries.

Draft resolution A/C.3/71/L.24: Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic

52. **Mr. Al-Mouallimi** (Saudi Arabia), introducing the draft resolution, said that it had been sponsored by almost 60 States, including the majority of Arab States and many members of the Non-Aligned Movement. Regrettably, the situation of human rights in Syria had continued to deteriorate over the previous 12 months; according to statistics compiled by the United Nations, more than 400,000 Syrians had been killed, more than 11 million had become refugees or internally displaced and more than 13.5 million people were in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. Syrian forces and their allies, including the Russian Federation, Iran, the terrorist group Hizbullah and other sectarian terrorist militias continued to bomb and destroy Syria's cities and towns, including, most tragically, the city of Aleppo, where mass killings and expulsions had reduced the population from 4 million people to a mere million. Most of the remaining inhabitants had lived under siege for months where they faced starvation and were denied urgently needed medical care.

53. The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria had warned that Aleppo would be completely destroyed before the end of 2016, and the Secretary-General had described the situation in Aleppo as worse than a slaughterhouse. The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic would no doubt make every effort to move the current debate away from the situation of human rights in his country by making baseless allegations against Saudi Arabia and the other sponsors of the draft resolution, accusing them, inter alia, of sponsoring terrorism. Nonetheless, it was impossible for him to conceal or justify the brutal crimes perpetrated by his Government against the Syrian people.

54. It was imperative that the international community heeded its moral conscience and took firm and decisive action to end the suffering of the Syrian people. Indeed, to refrain from taking any action would only increase their suffering and make the international community complicit in the destruction of Syria's cities, the use of chemical weapons, the expulsion of civilians from their homes and systematic ethnic and sectarian cleansing.

55. Inter alia, the draft resolution underscored the international community's strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic, strongly condemned all violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law committed in that country by any party to the conflict, called on the Syrian authorities to put an immediate end to all indiscriminate attacks against civilians, and condemned and denounced

all acts of terrorism and violence against civilians by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). The draft resolution also called for all perpetrators of human rights violations in Syria since March 2011 to be held accountable for their crimes and stressed that the Syrian crisis would continue until the parties to the conflict reached a political solution in accordance with the Geneva communiqué.

56. Saudi Arabia urged delegations to listen to their consciences and to stand by the Syrian people by voting in favour of the draft resolution.

57. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Comoros, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mauritania, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Somalia, Spain, Sweden, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Yemen had joined the sponsors.

58. **Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that it was deeply ironic that the Saudi delegation was tabling a draft resolution on behalf of its sponsors and paymasters on human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic. Saudi Arabia, a country with an appalling record of human rights abuses against both its own citizens and migrant workers, was, in fact, the very last country that should be allowed to lecture the United Nations on how to protect and promote human rights.

59. The entire world was aware that the ruling Al Saud and Al Thani families were key supporters and financiers of terrorism, and in confidential emails obtained by Wikileaks, United States presidential candidate Hillary Clinton and United States Vice President Joe Biden had both stated unambiguously that the ruling regimes in Saudi Arabia and Qatar and their sponsors were providing financial and logistical support to terrorist groups in Syria. Furthermore, customer receipts and photographs had provided unequivocal proof that approximately 60,000 vehicles that had been purchased from the Toyota automobile company by Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Jordan had been transferred by those countries to ISIL terrorists in Syria. Saudi terrorism was, in fact, a long-established phenomenon and the dark hand of the Saudi Arabian Government was behind terrorist attacks across the globe, including attacks in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, France and Belgium. It even sponsored terrorism in the east and south of Saudi Arabia itself, and United States President-elect Donald Trump had explicitly warned the Al Saud family that the brutal Wahhabi groups that it had created would one day destroy that very family.

60. The draft resolution underscored the political bankruptcy of the Al Saud entity and its partners and revealed its hysteria at the military victories of the Syrian Army and its allies against Saudi- and Qatari-sponsored Wahhabi terrorist groups. Furthermore, the failure of the Saudi attacks against Yemen, Syria and Iraq had provided ample evidence that those who sponsored violence would eventually be consumed from within by the violence they had unleashed.

61. The draft resolution also undermined efforts to promote constructive dialogue and build trust among Member States. The Syrian delegation was dismayed that certain States were attempting to seize control of United Nations human rights mechanisms and undermine the universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council. How had it been possible for Saudi Arabia, a country that still refused to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to sponsor a resolution criticizing human rights in Syria? And how had Saudi Arabia, a key supporter of ISIL, succeeded in purchasing a seat for itself on the Human Rights Council?

62. It was, moreover, impossible to turn a blind eye to the morally reprehensible way in which the Saudi regime had blackmailed the Secretary-General into removing the Saudi Arabia-led coalition from the list of parties in Yemen that, inter alia, killed or maimed children or engaged in attacks on schools and hospitals from the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (A/70/836) — it was, in fact, well known that Saudi Arabia had threatened to cut off all its financial support for United Nations agencies, including, in particular, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) unless the Secretary-General agreed to remove the coalition from that list. The backwardness and moral bankruptcy of the Saudi regime was also made clear when the Saudi ambassador to the United States of America had likened the Al Saud family's attacks on Yemen to a husband beating his wife.

63. Meanwhile, in Qatar, a country with no Constitution or democratic institutions that denied its citizens their fundamental right to vote, the Qatari poet Mohammad al-Ajami had been sentenced to life imprisonment for daring to speak out against restrictions on civil liberties in the country. The ruling Al Thani family's sponsorship of takfiri terrorist groups in Syria was also well known, and the Lutfallah 2 vessel incident had provided ample evidence that the regime was sending arms and materiel to terrorists in Syria through a Lebanese port. Qatar and Israel were also supporting terrorist groups, including ISIL, in the occupied Syrian Golan.

64. As for Turkey, that country was also a major State sponsor of terrorism in Syria, and even Turkish parliamentarians had admitted that the Turkish authorities had provided safe passage into Syrian territory for tens of thousands of terrorists.

65. In closing he cautioned Member States not to fall for the Saudi-Qatari ideological perversion and to vote against the draft resolution, which contravened the principled position of the Non-Aligned Movement of rejecting all country-specific resolutions on human rights situations, prolong the terrorism war against Syria, and impede efforts to achieve a political solution to the crisis.

66. **Mr. Ružička** (Slovakia), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the use of chemical weapons and the deliberate targeting of schools, hospitals and essential infrastructure by the Syrian regime and its allies might constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity. The European Union condemned the continued systematic, widespread and gross violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law, and specifically all attacks by armed groups on civilians in western Aleppo. It remained firmly committed to combatting groups classified by the United Nations as terrorist organizations, such as ISIL. The Syrian Government should cooperate with the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, which was doing vital work to preserve evidence of grave human rights violations for possible future criminal prosecutions.

67. However, it was important to ensure that resolutions on human rights remained objective and not overly political. The reference to foreign organizations and forces fighting on behalf of the Syrian regime in paragraph 24 of A/C.3/71/L.24 was worrying, as it did not support a political resolution to the conflict, which would be the quickest way to bring peace to Syria. The European Union remained committed to a peaceful transition, in accordance with Security Council resolution 2254 (2015).

68. **Mr. Shearman** (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) urged delegates to support the draft resolution in order to deliver an unambiguous message of condemnation of the Syrian regime, which was responsible for an estimated 400,000 deaths. The draft resolution was not politically motivated: it was based on clear evidence of human rights violations, brought to light largely by the Commission of Inquiry. Among other violations, the regime and its backers — which included the Russian Federation and Iran — were currently besieging up to 275,000 people in eastern Aleppo, using starvation as a weapon of war. The international community should use the draft resolution to put pressure on the regime and its supporters to end the human rights violations, including violence against civilians, allow sustained humanitarian access to besieged areas like Aleppo and commit to a political resolution of the conflict.

69. **Ms. Sison** (United States of America) urged all delegations to vote in favour of the draft resolution. The international community must support the victims of the human rights abuses committed by the Syrian Government, which included torture in detention centres and at other secret locations. In solidarity with the Syrian people, her Government called for an immediate end to all human rights violations and abuses, and for their perpetrators, in particular the Assad regime, to be held to account.

70. **Mr. Begeç** (Turkey) said that although adopting the draft resolution could not alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people, it would send a message: the perpetrators of the crimes must be held responsible and the international community would not remain silent in the face of the ongoing human rights abuses. The Syrian regime, which had long ago lost any claim to legitimacy, was massacring its own people and targeting infrastructure required for the provision of humanitarian assistance, particularly in eastern Aleppo. His Government, in solidarity with the Syrian people, supported the draft resolution and encouraged others to do the same.

71. **Ms. Al-Thani** (Qatar) said that the Third Committee had a responsibility to adopt a further resolution on the grave human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, particularly in view of the Syrian regime's ongoing grievous violations of international human rights and humanitarian law and the plight of civilians in Aleppo. Shockingly, war crimes and crimes against humanity were being perpetrated in Syria with increasing frequency and, according to the October 2016 report of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism, contained in document S/2016/888, the Syrian regime had carried out at least three attacks involving chemical weapons, while the terrorist group ISIL had perpetrated one other chemical weapon attack. Women, children, older persons, the sick and medical and humanitarian personnel comprised most of the victims of the war crimes and human rights violations taking place in Syria, and the ongoing violence in that country continued to undermine international peace and security, exacerbate international terrorism and worsen what was an already grave refugee crisis. The international community must send a strong and unambiguous message to the parties to the conflict, emphasizing the need for an immediate cessation of hostilities, the unimpeded provision of humanitarian assistance to those in need, and its determination to prosecute those responsible for the egregious crimes perpetrated against Syrian civilians. Her delegation therefore strongly urged all States to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

72. **Mr. Dehghani** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the draft resolution was biased and politically motivated, and contained provisions that ran counter to the basic principles of international law. Those who were heroically fighting ISIL and the newly dubbed Jabhat al-Nusrah li-Ahl al-Sham were libelled in paragraph 24, which served to create confusion about which groups were terrorist groups. The Al-Quds Brigades and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps were part of the regular armed forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran; they were deployed in Syria on an exclusively advisory basis at the formal invitation of the Syrian Government to support the resistance to the terrorist onslaught. Not only were the accusations levelled in that paragraph baseless, they were irrelevant to the work of the Third Committee and incompatible with the title of the draft resolution, which purported to address human rights in Syria. Without the aforementioned groups' efforts on the ground to fight terrorism and violent extremism, more of the Middle East would already have fallen under the black flag of ISIL.

73. The main sponsors of the draft resolution had been wreaking havoc in Yemen over the last year and a half. They were exploiting the Third Committee to advance their own political agendas and to support the terrorists that they were sending into Syria and neighbouring countries. The people of Syria and the Syrian Government would ultimately defeat the terrorists, despite the draft resolution and the lavish spending of its main sponsors.

74. **Mr. Ja** Song Nam (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that his Government maintained its principled opposition to all country-specific resolutions. Individual countries' human rights situations should be addressed through cooperative dialogue, with respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, peace and security. The most useful mechanism for such dialogue was the universal periodic review. His delegation would vote against the draft resolution.

75. **Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, although the sponsors claimed that the draft resolution was balanced and objective, and that their overriding concern remained the interests of the Syrian people, their insistence on referring to the legitimate Government of the Syrian Arab Republic as the "Syrian regime" revealed their lack of objectivity and disdain for Syrians. His delegation asked the secretariat of the Committee to seek a clarification from the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat on whether it was permissible to refer to the Government of Member State as a regime in draft resolutions submitted to the General Assembly.

76. **The Chair** said that the Legal Counsel would be consulted regarding the permissibility of the term "regime" to refer to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic in draft resolution A/C.3/71/L.24.

77. *The meeting was suspended at 12.25 p.m. and resumed at 12.45 p.m.*

78. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that, based on the consultation with the Office of Legal Affairs, he firstly recalled that precedents existed for

the use of "Syrian regime" in resolutions. Secondly, the Secretariat considered that the question which had been raised was not, strictly, a legal one. It therefore recommended that the Committee should proceed with its consideration of the draft resolution.

79. **Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that it was shocking that even the Office of Legal Affairs responded to legitimate questions in a politicized manner. The Syrian delegation had sought a clarification in order to ascertain whether the Office of Legal Affairs was indeed independent; it was now abundantly clear that the Office was far from independent and did not respect the rules of procedure of the Organization. The profoundly disappointing, morally unacceptable and unprofessional opinion of the Office of Legal Affairs implied that it was permissible for delegations to use derogatory and insulting language when referring to the Governments of other Member States, and that the use of such language was sanctioned under international law. His delegation therefore refused to accept that opinion, which seriously undermined the moral and ethical foundations of the United Nations that Member States had striven so hard to establish over many decades.

80. *A recorded vote was taken on draft resolution A/C.3/71/L.24.*

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Latvia, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Yemen.

Against:

Algeria, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Burundi, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic, Uzbekistan, Venezuela Bolivarian Republic of, Zimbabwe.

Abstaining:

Angola, Armenia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Mali, Mauritius, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Paraguay, Philippines, Rwanda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Seychelles, Singapore, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Suriname, Tajikistan, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam, Zambia.

81. *Draft resolution A/C.3/71/L.24 was adopted by 116 votes to 15, with 49 abstentions.*

82. **Mr. Dehghani** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the draft resolution was a disservice to the Third Committee, contravened the basic principles of international law and did nothing but reward violent extremism and terrorism. It was peculiar that a number of Western countries that preached to others about human rights, including the United Kingdom, had sided with countries that, at the very least, had always exported intolerance to many parts of the world, to say nothing of what they did with the people inside their borders. It was extremely unfortunate that the structural weakness of the United Nations human rights mechanisms was providing those countries with the

opportunity to abuse the system and have such resolutions issued. His Government and its allies would not be dissuaded, however, from fighting violent extremism.

83. **Mr. Amorós Núñez** (Cuba) said that his delegation had voted against the draft resolution, owing to its punitive nature and its disregard for the interests and positions of the country concerned. The international community must set aside interventionist agendas and calls for regime change and seek political solutions that would consider the interests and aspirations of the Syrian people, which could not be achieved with resolutions attempting to undermine the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Syria. The emphasis should be on actions that would bring an end to violence, massacres and terrorist acts.

84. His delegation advocated for a peaceful and negotiated solution and urged the Third Committee to contribute to that effort, not by means of condemnation and interventionist demands, but rather by fostering cooperation in full respect for the sovereignty of the Syrian State. To achieve success, the international community must once and for all abandon politically motivated and selective practices, such as the current draft resolution, which only delayed a solution.

85. **Ms. Dagher** (Lebanon) said that, with a view to safeguarding its integrity and stability, his country had consistently maintained a neutral stance with regard to the ongoing crisis in Syria and had abstained from voting on all draft resolutions on that crisis that were submitted to the United Nations and the League of Arab States for adoption. However, despite its abstention from voting on the current draft resolution, her country continued to support all efforts to end the violence in Syria, achieve a political solution to the ongoing crisis, address the needs of all those it had displaced and provide support to States hosting Syrian refugees. Hizbullah, to which reference had been made in the draft resolution, was a Lebanese political party that participated in her country's parliament and Government. She reaffirmed her country's principled position that a distinction must be made between terrorism and legitimate resistance against foreign occupation and underscored the key role played by Hizbullah in the struggle against the Israeli occupation.

86. **Mr. Minami** (Japan) said that the deterioration of the human rights situation in Syria was of grave concern. The worsening situation in Aleppo was particularly worrying, and required immediate action. It was necessary to prevent any further civilian sacrifices and resume the political process to achieve a long-term solution.

87. However, it was important for human rights resolutions to remain objective and not become overly politicized. Although it supported the resolution, his delegation was uncomfortable with the reference to the Al-Quds Brigades and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps in paragraph 24.

88. **Mr. Sandoval Mendiolea** (Mexico) said that the humanitarian crisis in Syria was of serious concern. His Government strongly condemned the use of chemical weapons, as well as other weapons and means of combat prohibited by international humanitarian law, especially when they affected civilians. The conflict must be peacefully resolved with the participation of all parties. In the meantime, his Government called for the human rights of the civilian population to be protected and respected, and for humanitarian access to be allowed. In view of those considerations, his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution.

89. **Mr. Scappini Ricciardi** (Paraguay) said that his delegation had abstained from voting on the draft resolution. His Government was deeply concerned by the deterioration of the human rights situation in Syria, and it wanted to express its solidarity with those groups of the population that had been disproportionately affected, such as Syrian children. It condemned all violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, and called on all parties to the conflict to respect the life and safety of civilians.

90. It was disappointing, however, that the draft resolution did not recognize the extent to which certain armed groups fighting on the ground were responsible for the spread of extremism and the violations of international humanitarian law. The parties to the conflict were urged to intensify their efforts to achieve a political solution in order to establish lasting, sustainable peace, which was essential if the Syrian people were to realize their right to a dignified life.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.